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REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and
Special Envoy Scott Gration on the Five Year Anniversary of The Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan**

**January 8, 2010
Treaty Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. Five years ago this week, the longest running war in Africa came to a close. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan ended a stubborn and violent civil conflict between North and South and offered fresh hope of real peace for the Sudanese people. This historic achievement was shepherded and encouraged by the international community, but it could not have happened without the leadership and political will of the parties in Sudan.

Since 2005, the ceasefire has, for the most part, held. Northern troops have pulled out of the South and a new government of national unity was formed in Khartoum. A regional government of Southern Sudan was created in Juba. Oil wealth has been shared with the South. The parties have made progress on some of the disputed border areas of Abyei and have passed legislation to prepare for elections and the 2011 referenda on self-determination.

Now, these are positive steps, but they are not enough to secure lasting peace. Threats to progress are real, reform of key institutions has been sporadic, and true democratic transformation – envisioned in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement – remains elusive. Violence in the South is rising and tensions continue in border areas. So today, the parties in Sudan have a choice. They can revert back to a dark era of conflict or they can move forward together toward a lasting peace.

In April, Sudan will hold its first national elections in 24 years. Less than a year after that, the people of Southern Sudan and Abyei will determine whether to remain part of Sudan or form an independent country. These elections are important milestones in Sudan's evolution, and the parties should be commended for overcoming major hurdles to get to this phase. But now they must work to ensure that the elections and referenda take place on time, with their outcomes respected.

The parties in the international community have barely begun to grapple with the potential outcomes of this historic upcoming vote, so we must work diligently together over the next year to prepare Sudan and the region for all potential scenarios.

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I'm very pleased to be releasing a joint statement with Foreign Minister Store and Foreign Secretary Miliband from Norway and the UK pledging the commitment of our respective governments to helping bring peace to Sudan. Among areas of concern will be the impact of the election decision on Darfur, where human suffering continues on a mass scale and a six-year-old conflict remains unresolved.

Let me reiterate what I have said before, that the conflict in Darfur and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement must be seen in tandem. The United States continues to push the Government of Sudan and the Darfur rebels to facilitate the work of aid agencies in the region and to allow full access for UNAMID. We continue to encourage mediation in all parties to find a solution to choose to participate for the Darfuris in the elections, preventing their further marginalization. We are concerned by the potential increase in violence if the status quo remains.

In the months ahead, strong leadership will be even more essential, especially in light of setbacks that have already occurred during this pre-election process, so there's serious work to be done by everyone.

In Southern Sudan, no matter the outcome of the referendum, Southern Sudan must increase its institutional capacity and prepare to govern responsibly, whether as a semiautonomous region within Sudan or a newly independent nation.

I have been tracking the increasing interethnic and tribal violence in the South over the course of 2009, and I share the concerns raised in recent reports that highlight the death of more than 2,500 people and displacement of more than 350,000. These stark figures illustrate the need for the Government of South Sudan to improve governance and security in the South with the assistance of international partners, including the United States.

The National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement must be willing to make the compromises and commitments necessary to build mutual confidence and achieve stability and lasting peace. Specifically, the National Congress Party must recognize that, as the dominant political party, it bears greater responsibility in ensuring the full and successful implementation of the CPA.

The NCP, therefore, must use its executive order to suspend elements of the national security and public order laws that are incompatible with free and fair elections. There must be no efforts to restrict freedom of speech and assembly. And there must be no prohibitions on peaceful protests. There must be sincere efforts to appoint members of the two referenda commissions and determine criteria for voter eligibility. And both parties must begin immediately on negotiations on the critical issues surrounding the parties' relationships and use of shared wealth and resources after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement expires in July of next year.

The parties of Sudan cannot afford to delay and there can be no backtracking on agreements already reached. The risks are too serious: Renewed conflict between North and South would prolong human suffering and threaten stability and peace throughout the greater region.

Because Sudan is at a critical juncture after almost a half century of conflict, we hold all parties accountable if progress is impeded. The lives and futures of 40 million people are at stake. The United States is committed to helping the Sudanese parties and most particularly the Sudanese people to achieve a real and lasting peace that is long overdue. We will continue to provide leadership and mobilize international coordination in support of peace in Sudan.

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I'd like now to ask our Special Envoy Scott Gration, who has been working tirelessly over the last year, to come forward, make a few comments, and answer any of your questions, and I will be seeing all of you later for a press avail.

MR. GRATION: Thank you very much. I'd like to start by just giving you a brief overview of what has happened in the last year and then tell you a little bit about the future and then take your questions.

This last year has had some highs. We've seen progress on Abiye when the ruling was handed down from the Court of Arbitration at The Hague. That was rather successful. We've seen the relationship between Chad and Sudan improve, and that, we believe, will help the security in Darfur. We've seen the registration for elections be pulled off, really in many ways better than what we expected; 79 percent of the eligible voters registered. That was almost 16 million people out of the 20 million eligible voters.

There are, however, things that need to be fixed. We're very concerned about the situation in Darfur. The security situation continues to be bad. People continue to live in situations that are dire. They are fearful of their lives in some areas, and certainly they're fearful of being harassed and some folks with sexual-based violence. We have got to make a bigger difference in the security there.

We're also very concerned about the security in the South. You've all seen the numbers. The trend is up, and we're very concerned that the security issues, the tribal fighting, the inter-community conflicts that are taking place, could be factors that make it more difficult to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and, if the South chooses to secede, will make it more difficult to birth that nation.

At this point, I'd like to take your questions on any topic.

QUESTION: Andy Quinn from Reuters. I have a question. When the policy review was announced late last year, some analysts and activists criticized it as too much carrot and not enough stick. And the Secretary talked about setbacks that have happened since that review was unveiled, which may indicate that this idea of engaging Khartoum more isn't really bringing the results. So my question to you is: What is the current state of discussions about what happens to the Khartoum government and the NCP if they don't deliver on these areas of progress that the Secretary outlined – public security, the election law, all of these things? And what are you saying to them will happen if they don't make the progress that you're demanding?

MR. GRATION: What we've seen is that there have been some progress in terms of passing the laws. As you know, the referendum law for Southern Sudan was passed, as was the referendum law for Abiye. The Popular Consultations Law, the National Security Act, and the Trade Union Law and a variety of other laws were passed by the end of the national assembly period that ended at the end of last year. So there have been some progress.

And what we're taking a look now is taking a look at those areas where there's been progress and taking a look at those areas where there hasn't been progress, where we need to have more push and more pressure. And right now, we're getting ready for a review at the deputies committee level that will be happening at the end of this month, and at that point the deputies will consider the facts on the ground and they will take a look at these based on benchmarks and ideas that we've put forth in the classified working papers, and then we'll proceed.

QUESTION: Is there some secret annex about – there's all this debate about – I mean, are there pressures ready, at the ready, to employ? And also, you know, you said they passed these laws, but at the end of the year there was – the congress – the parliament changed some of the wording of this. I mean, are you really satisfied?

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MR. GRATION: Yeah, let me just (inaudible) tell you about the working papers. There are working papers that were developed in the course as we were preparing the Sudan strategy that we laid out for you in October. Those working papers are NSC working papers, but they do outline a system of pressures and incentives that can be used to push or pull the situation in Sudan to get those things accomplished that the international community believes should be accomplished.

In terms of those laws, you're correct that the national assembly made some modifications to the laws. The – specifically, the Southern referendum law. That law was reintroduced into the national assembly and it was passed without amendment and it was passed in the way that President Bashir and Vice President Kiir had agreed on the 13th of December. So all those annexes and changes and amendments were not part of the final bill that was approved by the national assembly.

So what I'm trying to tell you is that both the SPLM and the NCP agreed with the wording on the 13th of December, and that wording is the wording that was passed at the end.

QUESTION: Sir, your own plans for travel to Sudan?

MR. GRATION: Yes, I will be going to Kenya and Uganda beginning on the 26th and then I'll end up at the Africa Union summit at the beginning of February. I do plan to go back into Sudan in the middle of February. The reason for the delay is there's a couple things that we're working through, and just because I'm not there doesn't mean we're not coordinating. We work via email, video teleconference and teleconference on the phone lines almost on a daily basis.

Right now we're in contact with President Mbeki and we're seeing how the Africa Union and his new role with the high-level panel and his involvement in the CPA implementation and in Darfur. We're also taking a look at what Mr. Gambari will be doing. We're also supporting what is happening in Doha as civil society and the rebels will come together around the 21st of this month for continued negotiations.

So there's a lot of issues that we're working hard, but it makes sense for me to go back in February. Again, as I pointed out, my focus will be on security in Darfur because I believe that if we can fix the security, the lawlessness, the banditry, the carjackings, the hijackings, if we can get that kind of thing taken care of, the rest of issues that have to do with humanitarian access, eventual voluntary return, and the other issues that are looming out there can be taken care of. But they cannot be taken care of with the current situation that we have, where local rule of law is not sufficient and where local criminal elements rule the day.

And in the South, we'll continue to work on issues like conflict mitigation, working between the tribes to make sure that they have adequate security forces and that we can stop the crises before they turn into violence.

QUESTION: Are you planning to meet with President Bashir (inaudible)?

MR. GRATION: No, I have no plans to meet with President Bashir, nor have I met him in the past.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the conditions currently exist on the ground today for elections to be free and fair?

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MR. GRATION: I believe that we are working hard on processes that will allow credible elections to be had in April. The one thing that you must remember is that these are the first elections that have been held since 1986, so we have a gap of almost 24 years since we've had this kind of transformation that we're seeing right now.

We believe that the elections are important for several reasons. One is, is that it allows all the parties of Sudan to participate in the process. They will each have an opportunity to put their candidates up against the legislative seats, and if they want to they can put up candidates against the governmental seats at the state level and at the national level. So this gives an opportunity for all parties to play, not just the SPLM and the NCP.

Number two, it is a process that we're seeing has a lot of momentum. We didn't expect that almost 79 – four out of five people would go out and register to vote. This is huge, and we're excited about that opportunity, and we would like those elections to take place in a way that the people's will can be made known and that they can learn how to participate in the government process.

The other thing that's important for us is that – the timing of the election. We would like those elections to take place in April because the rains start right after that. And we believe that if they are delayed, the rains will be a problem. In some areas the rains, as you know, will keep people from being able to get to the polling places.

The other thing is that we start registration for the referendum in Abyei and in the South in July, and it would be good if we could separate those two events. We believe that the election gives us an opportunity to practice those elements that will be so important in the referendum. If we can get it right on how to do voter education, get the laws passed, get the commissions up and running and funded, to get the processes out just in terms of the logistics and admin of printing ballots, making sure that the system has security so people can come and go freely, to make sure it's transparent, and to make sure that those results are passed out in a way that everybody recognizes that this is credible. That is so critical, not only to the election but to the referenda that will be taking place in January of 2011.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. GRATION: Thank you very much.

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